



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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## **GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS JUNE 5-9 HUNGER AWARENESS WEEK** *STATE AGENCIES WORK TO WIPE OUT FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— Governor Phil Bredesen has proclaimed June 5-9 Hunger Awareness Week in Tennessee. The week coincides with National Hunger Awareness Day, which is observed on June 6. More than 38 million Americans live in households that are unable to purchase adequate food to meet their basic needs.

“Hunger hits the very old and the very young especially hard,” Bredesen said. “It’s a grim fact that even here in Tennessee, people still face hunger and uncertainty about how to provide this basic necessity for their families. And while federal nutrition programs and those administered by state agencies are working every day to ensure those most in need receive nutritional assistance, too often these programs must still be supplemented by area food banks and pantries.”

Bredesen established a food assistance program called Nashville’s Table during his tenure as mayor to reduce hunger by rescuing excess prepared and perishable food and providing it to those in need. In July 2005, Nashville’s Table merged with Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee.

There are more than 380,000 households—that’s over 850,000 individuals—on the Food Stamp program in Tennessee. More than 650,000 children participate in the School Lunch Program each day in Tennessee, and 150,000 low-income mothers and their children benefit from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, each month.

“Studies show that over 40 percent of low-income children live in households that are hungry or at risk of hunger,” said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. “Children make up nearly 40 percent of all emergency food clients. Another 20 percent of these food pantry or food bank recipients are the elderly. We need to make sure that these vulnerable citizens are receiving the assistance they need.”

DHS recently launched two pilot programs in Memphis and Nashville to help increase access to the Food Stamp program. The programs are funded through an \$800,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). DHS workers will target at-risk populations, like seniors, by visiting senior centers, area churches and other service agencies to educate and sign up eligible citizens.

Several DHS county offices across the state are participating in food drives to aid local charities.

For more information about DHS and its programs, visit [www.state.tn.us/humanserv](http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv)

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